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ABSTRACT

Three issues of a current awareness bulletin published occasionally by the ERIC Clearinghouse for Social Studies are combined in this document. The bulletins are designed for use by elementary and secondary social studies teachers. The various issues, written in 1976, deal with emerging topics of interest related to reading in the social studies, the basic education movement, and evaluating values education. The format of each four-page bulletin differs slightly, but generally each includes a definition of the topic, interviews with leaders in the field, abstracts of ERIC documents related to the topic, and a short annotated bibliography of books, games, and multimedia products in the field. In the first interview, Lunstrum, favoring a content-centered or functional approach, suggests that all teachers should be teaching reading skills. In the second set of interviews, three experts discuss their philosophies about basic education and the back to basics movement, and implications for social studies teachers. The final interview examines why evaluating values education is important. It is suggested that successful evaluation is possible when teachers precisely formulate the goals and objectives of values education programs. (JR)

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Looking At

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READING IN THE SOCIAL STUDIES

purpose

Looking At... is published to let you know what we know about an emerging topic of interest or current concern to elementary and secondary social studies teachers. We, after all, are a "clearinghouse." We select, abstract, and index current hard-to-obtain documents for *Resources in Education* (RIE) and current periodical articles for *Current Index to Journals in Education* (CIJE). Also, we commission or prepare social studies practical guidance papers, interpretive papers, and reference tools when need, literature, and practice warrant. In the process of doing this work we get around, talk with many people throughout the country, have many visitors, and receive many letters and telephone calls for information about who is doing what, and what is the latest activity on a topic. Before enough theory, practice, or materials have crystallized or surfaced to warrant a practical guidance paper, we hope to make available information about practice, people, materials, and ideas on new topics--performing a clearinghouse and communication function through *Looking At....*

Looking At... is also intended to be a catalyst that increases communication from you to the clearinghouse. Please send us descriptions of your work, announcements, questions, syllabi, guides, experimental materials, and suggestions for possible topics for future issues of *Looking At...*

Interview: Dr. John Lunstrum

Within the last decade, there has been increased emphasis and interest in reading in the content areas. Serious problems with readability exist in many of the disciplines including social studies. Dr. John P. Lunstrum, Professor of Education at Florida State University in Tallahassee, is especially interested in this subject area. His concentration is on social studies with a special focus on reading and language skills. In the January 1976 issue of *Social Education* Lunstrum wrote an article in which he did a preliminary analysis of recent research on reading in the social studies.

Nancy Dille, a staff member of ERIC/ChESS, interviewed Dr. Lunstrum in February 1976 to find out how social studies teachers can teach reading skills while dealing with content.

Dille: What should be the basic direction or orientation of reading instruction in the social studies?

Lunstrum: In general, I favor a content-centered or functional approach. By that I mean that the K-12 social studies teacher would introduce and develop reading strategies and skills while teaching a given course. This way the teacher can assess the reading performance of students with reference to the materials being used and can design appropriate strategies for facilitating content comprehension without a major reorientation of the regular classroom procedure.

Dille: Then, do you feel that it is not only the responsibility of elementary teachers to teach reading skills, but that of secondary social studies teachers as well?

Lunstrum: Secondary social studies teachers simply cannot escape this responsibility. Content skills and expectations of the new social studies make it necessary for pupils to process print media efficiently, read and comprehend basic issues, and grasp new concepts.

Dille: Should every social studies teacher teach reading or only those teachers with students whose reading level is below average?

Lupstrum: Every teacher, in my judgment, should be teaching reading skills when dealing with content. Unfortunately, many competent students develop inefficient reading habits in the absence of reading instruction and, thus, never realize their potential. When concentrating on disabled readers, we often fail to challenge capable students to read critically and creatively.

Dille: Can reading be taught with existing classroom resources, or does a teacher need special materials?

Lunstrum: That depends on what reading skills the teacher wishes to develop. The materials currently being used in a classroom can be appropriate for emphasizing certain skills: using context aids in word recognition, using structural analysis for vocabulary development, etc. But, if the materials are too difficult for most students, the teacher must restructure the materials or introduce other materials and strategies more suitable to the students' interests and reading abilities.

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Dille: How can a teacher with a heterogeneous class use/adapt materials that are too sophisticated for some students, or should different materials for each reading level of the students be used?

Lunstrum: There is no simple, tested solution to this common problem; however, some approaches have been used successfully. One is a flexible grouping arrangement in the classroom on the basis of student achievement or interest. Assignments or tasks are differentiated according to particular reading skill levels that are required. For example, the teacher can prepare reading-study guides on certain topics, using Harold Herber's model of three levels of comprehension: literal, interpretive, and applied (*Teaching Reading in Content Areas*, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1970). Students with minimal reading skills are encouraged to first complete those tasks requiring literal comprehension or recall of basic information. Then they move to the interpretive level as their reading skills improve, and draw inferences from the material.

Another approach is to allow for individualization with self-pacing units or "contracts." Learning centers can be set up to create student interest in certain activities that relate to topics studied in the materials. Students would clarify concepts introduced in a text through media tools like slides and cassettes. Graphic overviews of topics are presented, and difficult vocabulary is identified, explained, and used in similar context. , basic study and locational skills are taught to use the text, maps, photos, time-lines, and ary. Media is used extensively to clarify ideas and timulate student interest.

Dille: How can a teacher judge the reading level of materials?

Lunstrum: A teacher can make an informal but fairly reliable assessment in several ways. A group-reading inventory could be designed and administered. Students would silently read selected passages and then discuss literal and interpretative questions about them. Another way is to allow some pupils to read aloud selected passages and then have the class respond to questions about the readings.

Dille: Are readability formulas useful?

Lunstrum: Some formulas are fairly easy to apply and adequately indicate the reading-difficulty level. These are probably better predictors of reading levels of materials than teacher judgments.

Dille: What problems are involved when using a readability formula?

Lunstrum: They do not reflect concept load or density, nor do they provide sufficient instruction for rewriting materials in order to facilitate student comprehension. I recommend using a systematic deletion process called "cloze" or its modification called "maze." Cloze is more sensitive to concept load, and its use in assessing student ability to comprehend materials is fairly established in research literature.

Dille: How can a social studies teacher find out whether to use a formula?

Lunstrum: Some International Reading Association (IRA) publications contain articles that address the needs of content teachers, particularly the *Journal of Reading* for the secondary grade levels and the *Reading Teacher* for the elementary levels. Some useful papers from IRA conferences are located in ERIC. In addition, some professional social studies journals have recently included articles about teaching reading.

Dille: There seems to be some controversy that the "new social studies" materials are too sophisticated for use by students of the intended grade levels. What should teachers look for with respect to the reading level of the "new social studies" materials?

Lunstrum: While a material's reading level, or levels within it, can predict a measure of difficulty, I suggest looking particularly at its conceptual structure and instructional strategies. Student comprehension is facilitated by clear explanations of significant, relevant concepts presented in a structured, systematic manner.

Dille: Is a special classroom climate needed for maintaining student interest while teaching reading?

Lunstrum: Yes. I believe a climate which supports reading in social studies classrooms can be established by incorporating certain elements into teaching.

Dille: What elements do you suggest for establishing that climate?

Lunstrum: Some of the following are helpful: (1) select content materials in which concepts are adequately clarified; (2) use inquiry about controversial issues to show relevance of reading tasks; (3) use discovery and game tactics to clarify concepts and generate reasoning processes; (4) provide students the opportunity to clarify their values and develop interpersonal skills; and (5) introduce content that has an intrinsic interest or appeal to the students. For example, the instructor could use music which reflects social and historical concerns, audio- or videotapes of controversial radio and TV broadcasts, newspaper interpretations of national and local news, or folktales that reflect societal values and norms.

Dille: Should a social studies teacher use student materials that deal with propaganda and prejudice?

Lunstrum: I think it is difficult and unwise to avoid such materials. In a pluralistic, democratic society propaganda and prejudice are inevitable in some form, particularly in the mass media. It follows, I believe, that we should help students develop criteria for evaluating what they hear, see, and read. This involves sensitizing students to their own values and attitudes which affects their perception of words and events.

This *Looking At...* bulletin was prepared by Nancy Dille.

If you have questions or would like information about other areas related to reading, contact the ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, Illinois 61801, telephone 217-328-3870.

Readability

Readability formulas first started appearing as early as the 1920s and gained in popularity in the late 40s and 50s. Reading specialists at first considered the new formulas as a solution for all reading problems. Although that view has since tempered, readability formulas are still widely discussed and used.

Essentially, readability formulas attempt to measure the reading ease of material by evaluating elements of language, most often vocabulary difficulty, sentence complexity, and interest value of words. In using most formulas an evaluator first scores the individual language factors according to formula directions and then puts the separate scores into some sort of mathematical formula which yields a reading grade level. The end product of a readability formula is usually a grade-level score.

About 30 formulas are in existence and there are many variations of each. Three formulas are used most often and are probably more familiar to educators using readability formulas.

Dale-Chall Formula. Edgar Dale and Jeanne Chall first presented their formula in 1948. Since that time it has become a popular and widely used formula. The formula itself is very thorough and extensive, yielding a fairly accurate grade level. However, it is more complicated and time-consuming than most other formulas. The Dale-Chall formula makes use of a 3000-word list which measures vocabulary load. Using the material which is to be evaluated, the investigator counts the number of words in sentences and counts the number of words not on their 3000-word list, and fits those figures into the formula from which a specific grade level is produced.

Fry Readability Graph. Edward Fry proposed his readability graph in 1965. It is now extensively used by classroom teachers. Classroom instructors find it a useful tool because it takes less time to use and is less complex. It involves selecting three 100-word passages from various parts of the material, counting the number of sentences in each passage, and counting the number of syllables in each passage. The average number of words per sentence and average number of syllables are computed and then plotted on Fry's graph which determines the grade levels of the passages.

Cloze Procedure. In 1953 Wilson Taylor developed the cloze procedure. This procedure has increased in popularity in the past few years. Using this method the evaluator takes the material in question and deletes every fifth word. The student is then asked to complete the passage by determining the exact word which was deleted and replacing it. Minor misspellings are considered as correct answers. The percentage of items correctly "clozed" by the students is compared with a criterion scale to determine if the material is of an appropriate level for the students. Only functional reading levels are determined, not grade levels. This procedure is used to measure concept or idea density. Because of this, it is generally recommended that the cloze procedure rather than a formula be used with social studies materials. Normally, "cloze" is used for secondary materials and its modified version, "maze," is used for elementary materials.

Book Review

Laffey, James L., Ed. *Reading in the Content Areas.* 1972. 236 pp. International Reading Association, Six Tyre Avenue, Newark, Delaware 19711. $4.50.

This book was produced as part of an International Reading Association Monograph Series. Its purpose is to deal primarily with those reading skills which will become the major responsibility of content area teachers, offering instructors ways to translate research findings into classroom practice. The book is divided into sections by content areas: literature, mathematics, sciences, social studies, and use of printed mass media. It reviews, analyzes, and synthesizes the findings of selected research related to content reading. In addition, it describes how the findings of this research apply to classroom instruction for each content area. The emphasis of each section is on reading skills directly related to that content area. Two chapters deal with content reading in the social studies. The first chapter by Thomas H. Estes, presents a review of the research since 1950. Three problem areas are singled out for attention in the review: the reading skills necessary for achievement in the social studies, strategies for teaching these skills, and the readability problems that social studies texts present to students. The second social studies chapter by Harold L. Herber, presents implications for teaching and research. Questions examined about teaching include where should the skills be taught, what skills should be taught, what vehicle should be used for the instruction, and how can the skills be taught? The authors provide the background social studies teachers should have before attempting to deal with the problem of teaching reading in the social studies.

Want More Information?

The following journal articles provide more in-depth information about readability formulas and procedures. Your library or reading center should carry these journals.

1. Dale, Edgar and Jeanne S. Chall, "A Formula for Predicting Readability," *Educational Research Bulletin*, No. 27, January 21, 1948.

2. Fry, Edward, "A Readability Formula That Saves Time," *Journal of Reading*, No. 11, April 1968.

3. Klare, George R., "Assessing Readability," *Reading Research Quarterly*, Vol. 10, No. 1, 1974-1975.

4. Taylor, Wilson L., "Cloze Procedure: A New Tool for Measuring Readability," *Journalism Quarterly*, No. 30, Fall 1953.

ERIC Documents on Reading

The following ERIC documents relate to the subject of content reading in the social studies. A representative sample has been chosen to illustrate the kinds of materials in the ERIC system. Use the term "content reading" to find other documents in *Resources in Education* on the topic of reading in the social studies. The documents abstracted below are available from ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS), P.O. Box 190, Arlington, Virginia 22210, unless otherwise noted. Microfiche (MF) and/or hard copy (HC) prices are given for each document. We suggest you refer to the complete abstract in *Resources in Education* before ordering.

ED 096 625. *Reading Skills Development in Content Areas. Handbook I.* 1973. 305 pp. EDRS price: MF-$0.76; HC-$15.86.

This handbook, designed as part of the Right to Read Program in Hampton, Virginia, focuses on the development of reading skills in the junior-high content-area classroom. Sections discussing the instructional and organizational strategies are followed by specific units of study. These individual units include learning objectives or concepts, materials, activities, and references. Unit titles include "The Universe," "The Three States of Matter," "Energy to Do Work," "A Nation in Conflict," "A New Nation is Launched," and "Inch Pill."

ED 097 620. *Reading Is Every Teacher's Business.* By Emma E. Plattor. Keynote address presented at the Professional Development Reading Seminar, Swan River, Manitoba, March 26, 1969. 13 pp. EDRS price: MF-$0.76; HC-$1.58.

Reading has a key role as a receptive skill in the communication process. It requires the ability to perceive visually and auditorally, to think abstractly and critically, and to apply thoughts to one's behavior. Readers must be taught independence, and specific abilities must be developed in the content areas. Reading is an essential element in an instructional program that produces critical thinkers who can communicate effectively and efficiently in oral and written form.

ED 105 408. *A Reading Program for the 1970s: Social Studies and Reading.* 1975. 43 pp. EDRS price: MF-$0.76; HC-$1.95 plus postage.

Developed by the Georgia State Department of Education, this plan can help social studies teachers develop the competencies they will need to teach students to read social studies materials in grades K-12. A sample unit and some suggested evaluation techniques illustrate the use of many materials at varied reading levels. Suggested classroom organizational patterns that will help the teacher to individualize instruction are included. Several techniques useful for determining student reading levels and readability levels of social studies materials are presented.

ED 108 115. *A Model for the Development of a Reading and Study Skills Inventory for Every Content Area.* By Robert T. Williams and Mitchell A. Kaman. 1975. 11 pp. EDRS price: MF-$0.76; HC-$1.58 plus postage.

To effectively determine each student's ability to read and learn in content areas, teachers need a group inventory which will evaluate both the study skills and reading skills necessary for success in their content area. This paper presents a model for the development and implementation of a Reading and Study Skills Inventory (RASSI). The elements needed to develop the program are examined.

ED 110 951. *ESSO--Self-Concept and Basic Reading in a Secondary School Program.* By Mary B. Theofield. 1975. 11 pp. EDRS price: MF-$0.76; HC-$1.58 plus postage.

This paper describes the English/Social Studies Opportunity (ESSO) Program which is designed for students with learning problems at Paint Branch High School in Burtonsville, Maryland. The program blends remedial reading and special education into a secondary school program which attempts to build reading and study skills, effect positive self-concept, and prepare students to cope with adult life situations. Sample schedules for two specific students are discussed to amplify the program description.

ED 110 958. *Reading in the Content Fields: An Annotated Bibliography, Revised 1975.* Compiled by Leo Fay and Lee Ann Jared. 1975. 20 pp. Available from International Reading Association, 800 Barksdale Road, Newark, Delaware 19711 (order no. 302-5, $0.75). EDRS price: MF-$0.76; HC-$1.58 plus postage.

Materials listed in this annotated bibliography include selections chosen from all major K-12 subject areas, restricted largely to publications of the past 10 years. Entries are listed under the following headings: general reading, research studies and reports, critical reading and thinking skills, study skills, readability of texts, social studies, language arts and literature, mathematics, and science.

ED 112 394. *100 Individualized Activities for Reading.* By Nicholas P. Crisuolo. 1974. 60 pp. Not available from EDRS. Available from Fearon Publishers, Inc., 6 Davis Drive, Belmont, California 94002 ($2.25).

Designed to provide a variety of prescriptions for supplementing a reading program through reinforcement of specific skills, this book presents 100 reading activities in the following areas: motivation, auditory discrimination, word analysis, vocabulary, and comprehension. For each activity an objective is stated, materials are listed, and a description is provided.

ED 113 678. *Reading in the Secondary School.* By Emma W. Rembert. 1975. 33 pp. EDRS price: MF-$0.76; HC-$1.95 plus postage.

Outlined in this paper prepared for the Florida International University School of Education, is a course for teaching reading in the secondary school. The course is designed for instructors both with or without previous study in the teaching of reading. The course is divided into the following five sections: reading perspectives or theory, secondary programs, assessment, classroom organization, and content-specific proficiencies. Each topic is examined along with a description of the goals, tasks, or assignments and suggested instructional resources.